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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8026  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0429  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0409  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0747  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0041  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0855  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0474

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SUBJECT: IRAN URGES/ENTICES MAURITANIA TO CUT TIES WITH  
ISRAEL

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for reasons 1.4 (b and  
d)

11. (SBU) Iranian Vice President Mohamed Ridha Rahimi came to Nouakchott January 13 and met with military junta leader General Aziz to discuss primarily Gaza. Press reports in the official media said the Iranian welcomed the Mauritanian decision to recall their ambassador. Independent press and LES employees report that the Iranians offered financial support in order to have Aziz cut ties.

12. (C) The Mauritanian delegation that met with the Iranian Vice President curiously included Ambassador Ahmed Deya, MFA Director for American and Asian Affairs, who has no policy connection to Gaza or Iran. It could be that he was just filling in, but perhaps there was a side conversation on policies related to the U.S. Iran currently has no diplomatic representation in Mauritania.

13. (C) Comment: The Israelis are still being assured that General Aziz does not intend to sever ties despite intense domestic and external pressure. Local diplomats believe that if Aziz does cut ties it will be because of the internal political situation and not strictly because of the Gaza crisis. The Spanish Ambassador, for instance, saw the Israeli card as something Aziz will use if the European Union decides to cut off assistance following the August 8 coup d'etat (that decision should come o/a February 20). For the Spaniard, "cutting aid will not hurt the regime. If Aziz cuts relations with Israel he will find all the financial support he needs from the Arabs." Significantly, one of the arguments raised by the military on why they launched the coup against President Abdallahi was that he was getting too cozy with Libya and the Iranians. As the regime continues to be condemned by the international community, we see Aziz increasing his contacts with Tripoli and Teheran. End Comment  
HANKINS